

How to Mount Needlework in a Boxtop

By Denise Beusen

These instructions were written for needlework done on 18-ct canvas but are adaptable to any ground fabric.

Materials

- Stitched needlework, blocked and/or pressed
- Box with an opening in the top to fit the needlework
- Flathead screwdriver
- Matboard (1 mm thick)
- Ruler; T-square is optional
- Blank piece of the same ground fabric used in the needlework (optional)
- 1/8" thick batting – polyester or cotton
- Lining fabric such as lamé (optional), pressed
- Fabric marker: this could be a 4H pencil, white pencil for marking dark fabric, disappearing pen, etc.
- Sharpies: fine point and ultra-fine point
- Straight pins
- Paper and scissors to cut it
- Tapes: Scotch Magic Tape, Artist's tape, and Scotch permanent double-sided tape
- Exacto knife to cut matboard
- Clips to secure needlework and backing fabric to board while working: Binder clips, quilter's clips, clothes pins, or the like. Binder clips work for canvas but may leave indentations in softer fabrics such as linen.
- Thread to lace needlework to padded board: Perle cotton, unwaxed dental floss, buttonhole, or quilter's thread. The weight needs to be suitable for the ground (canvas requires heavier thread than linen because of the additional sizing).
- Tapestry needle
- Beeswax
- Presto Sticky-Backed felt
- Usual stitching supplies



1. Preparation

- a. Sudberry boxes generally come with a few things secured in the top by flexible framer's points (1): a piece of cardboard, glass, instructions, felt feet for the box, etc. The cardboard will generally be a square or rectangle, even if the cutout in the boxtop is a circle or an oval.



- b. Use a flathead screwdriver (2) to bend back the flexible points so you can remove the glass, cardboard, and anything else that may have come with the box.



- c. In this example, there was cardboard, felt feet, and instructions printed on the back of the product description sheet (3). There was no glass.



- d. Examine the inside of the boxtop to ensure the opening is centered in the rabbet – the recessed cut around the opening where mounted needlework will sit (4). In this example, there's a uniform 3/16" deep rabbet all the way around the opening. I have previously purchased a box and only after mounting the needlework discovered that the opening wasn't centered in the rabbet. So the design was off center! The only recourse was to return the box to the merchant and hope the next one would be better (it was).



- e. Validate that the cardboard is a good template.

- Measure it to verify it is square. For this box with a 3 1/4" x 3 1/4" opening, the cardboard dimensions are 3 5/8" square. If the cardboard isn't square, cut a new piece of matboard that is and use it as a template.
- Check that there's space between the cardboard and boxtop sufficient for the ground fabric to wrap around the edge. Use a blank piece of ground fabric finger-pressed around the cardboard with corners mitered (5); check that it fits snugly into the boxtop and isn't easily moved from side to side (6). If it slides around, you'll need to make the template larger; if it fits snugly, the cardboard will work as a template; if it's too big to fit, the cardboard needs to be trimmed.

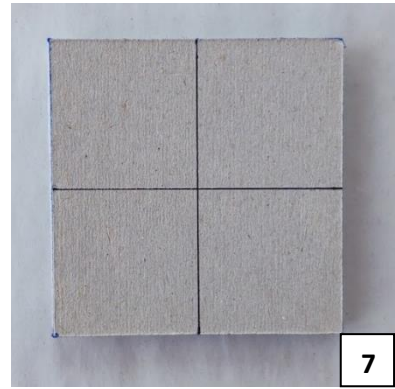


- f. Use the board to trace a square on two pieces of batting. A fine Sharpie marker creates an easily seeable line.
- Cut out one of the squares on the inside edge of the traced line. This piece of batting should be the same size as the board.
 - On the other square, use a ruler and ultra-fine Sharpie marker to mark and then cut a square that's 3/16" smaller on all sides of the square.



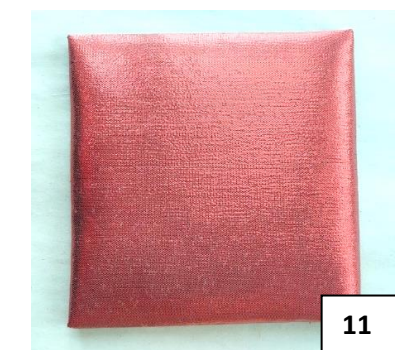
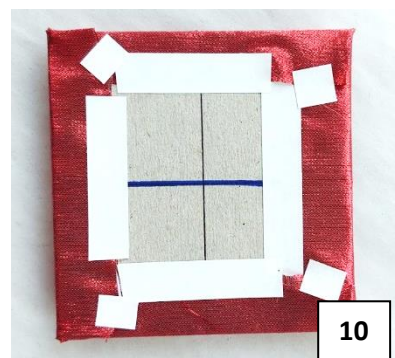
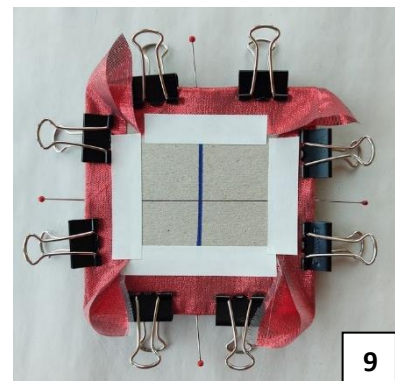
- g. If lining fabric is to be used, cut a piece that is 1.25" larger than the template all around. In this case, a lamé lining is needed because the holes in the 18-ct canvas are large enough that the batting would show through.

- h. Use the cardboard as a template to cut a piece of matboard. If the original cardboard appears too flimsy to lace needlework to it, cut a second piece of matboard for this purpose. (Note: PRES-ON needlework mounting boards are convenient but probably too thick to fit in most boxtops once needlework and padding are mounted on them.)
- i. Use a ruler to mark (on the back) the midpoint of each edge of the board; connect the marks to divide it into quadrants (7).
- j. Next create a paper “window” that mimics the box opening and will aid in centering the needlework in the boxtop opening. Lay the template on a piece of paper and trace around the outside edge (alternatively, photocopy the template or use software to print a square with the same dimensions as the template). Cut out the center of the drawn/printed square shape to create a paper “window”.



2. Pad the mounting board and cover with lining fabric

- a. On one side of the board, place a piece of double stick tape diagonally from one corner to the opposite corner, without overlapping the edge of the board.
- b. Center the smaller of the batting squares over the board and press down to adhere to the tape.
- c. Place a second piece of double stick tape on top of the batting, at 90 degrees to the first piece.
- d. Center the larger square of batting on top of the first piece and press to secure. At this point, you should have a sandwich (8).
- e. Center the padded board in the square of lining fabric; insert straight pins through the fabric into the board edge at each midpoint to secure the alignment. Use more pins or clips along the edge to hold the lining in place (9).
- f. The lamé is too fragile to lace, so use artist’s tape to secure the edges against the board (9); trim the corners. Fold the corners down and secure with small pieces of art tape (10). Just like sausage-making, the result looks great (11) but no one wants to see how it’s done 😊.



3. Mount the needlework on the padded and lined board

- a. Use a ruler to mark the center of each edge of the opening in the paper window; note the tick marks on the window in (12).
- b. Use regular Scotch tape to tape your needlework to a flat surface.
- c. Place the paper window over your needlework and center it around the design (12). Once positioned, use regular Scotch tape to tape the window to the same flat surface.
- d. Use a fabric maker to mark the ground fabric at the center of each side of the window (13). In this example, a white “dark fabric marking pencil” has been used; note the white dots in the center of each side.
- e. Measure 1.5” out from each marked center point line; trim the ground fabric so there’s a 1.5” margin all around the window. Trim the corners to within 1.25” of each corner (13).
- f. Draw a line from the center mark on each edge to the edge of the canvas (14).
- g. Place the needlework on the padded and lined board. Position it so the edges of the board line up with the grain of the canvas. Finger-press the edges, making sure any folds are on the grain of the canvas. Note that the edge of the board may be one or two threads outside the center marks on each edge of the canvas due to the added thickness of the padding. If, as in this example, there is bare ground fabric between the design and the padded board’s edge, count the number of bare threads on each side of the design to ensure it’s centered (15). Be sure to line up the quadrant lines on the board with the lines on the ground fabric (16, 17).
- h. Push a pin sideways through the ground fabric at each side midpoint and into the board (15, 16). Check again that the design area is centered on the board, then secure the edges with clips (17). For less stiff ground fabrics such as linen, pins at regular intervals may suffice.



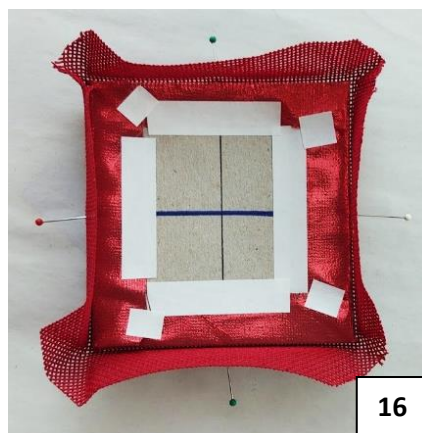
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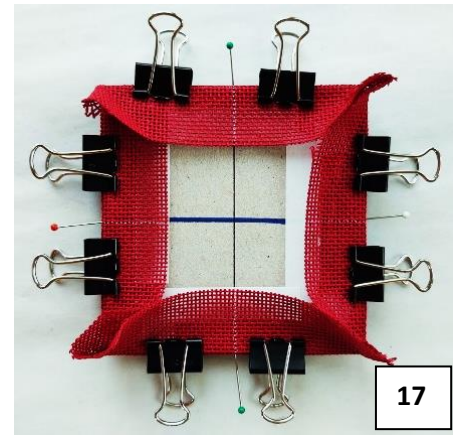


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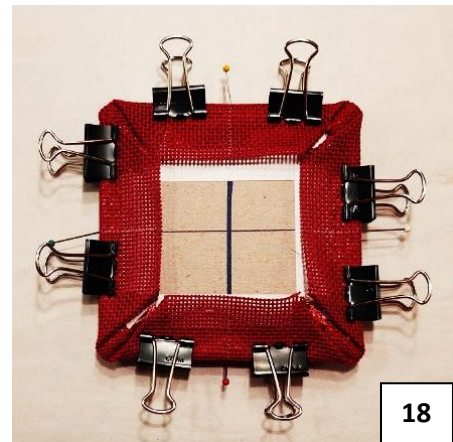


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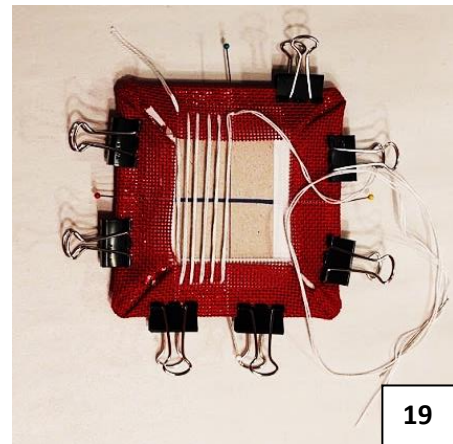
- i. Miter the corners of the ground fabric (18, you may need to temporarily remove the pins and clips adjacent) and check again that the design is centered. If not, make the needed adjustments in the pins and clips.
- j. Cut a length of the lacing thread. In this case, 3 yd #8 perle cotton doubled in a tapestry needle. Treat the thread with beeswax to reduce tangling and to help the thread grip the ground fabric.
- k. Start in the center of one side. Use a “shoe lacing” technique to anchor the midpoint of the thread length at the midpoint of the fabric: insert the needle into the canvas one thread to the right of the center line, come up two threads to the left, then go back into the starting hole and up again in the exit hole. This wraps the thread around two canvas threads to anchor it (19).
- l. Lace one half of the side, going down into the canvas when crossing from one side to the other. Take a horizontal stich 2-4 threads wide and come back out of the ground fabric, then cross to the other side. There’s no need to pull the stitches tightly at this point. Check the design to make sure it stays centered on the padded board (19).
- m. Lace the other half in the same manner (20). Once all the lacing stitches are in, go back to the center and use a laying tool to tighten each stitch in the first half, working in sequence from the center to the side through all the stitches. Check to make sure the design stays centered on the board. Repeat the process on the lacing stitches in the second half.
- n. As you work, check that the laced fabric is not warping the board and that there are no ripples in the canvas or the lining fabric.
- o. Repeat this process to lace the other two sides together.
- p. Tack the mitered corners down and tie off thread ends with a knot (21). For a piece this small on canvas, simply tacking the mitered corners is sufficient. With a more flexible ground or a larger work, stitching the mitered corners together may be necessary.



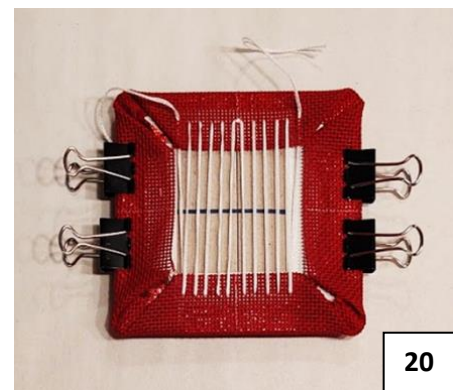
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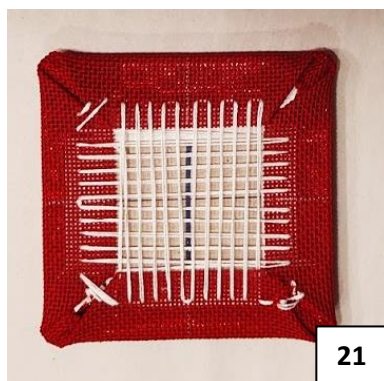
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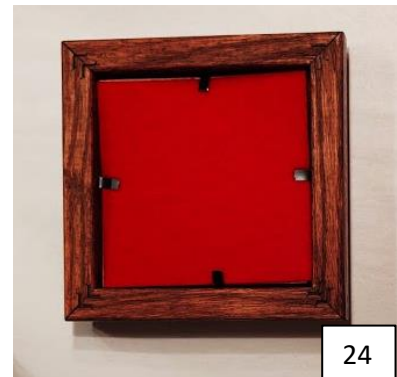
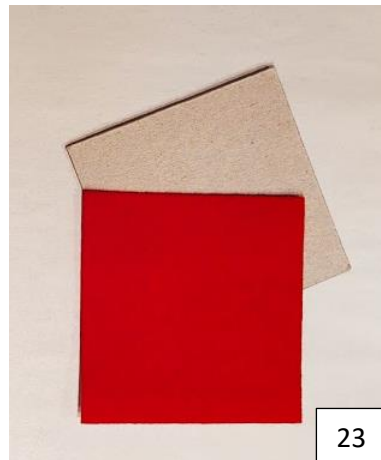
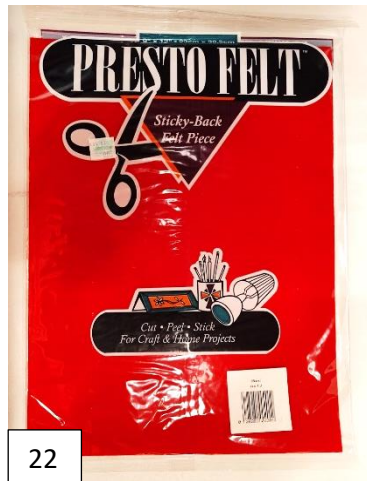
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4. Finishing the box

- a. Use the second piece of matboard as a template to cut a piece of Presto Sticky-back felt (22, 23). In principle, this could be applied directly to the back of the needlework but it would have a lumpy appearance. For a more polished look, remove the protective paper, center the felt over the center of the matboard, and press to adhere.
- b. Place the mounted embroidery into the lid of the box followed by the felt covered board. Secure the pair in the boxtop by using the flathead screwdriver to bend down the points (24).
- c. Apply the felt pads to the bottom of your box.



Enjoy your box!



Needlework design: Two of the "Ornament Quartet" by Marilyn Owen